

TAPPING THE CURRENTS

Thieves Who Steal Power and Light From Electric Wires.

SOME CASES IN THIS CITY

A Reputable Merchant Who Went Into the Robbery of Lightning on a Large Scale—"Queer" Wire Leading Into an F Street Store—Stock Quotations on the Sly.

Stealing thunder is old as Shakespeare, but stealing lightning is newer than the telephone. It is only in the past few years that the theft of the electric current has come to be noticed or guarded against at all.

Of course there have been thefts of money and more important of stock quotations and trade reports and of racing returns, but the theft of electricity itself for commercial purposes is a recent discovery.

In large cities, where there are a number of electric companies, furnishing power for all manner of machinery, as well as arc and incandescent lights, and in which the wires are carried in and out with very little regulation by the authorities, are to be found expert electricians who make a living by passing in wires for secretly tapping the currents of the great companies and getting the use of their power without paying for it.

This is most conveniently done where the wire runs near the surface of the ground in a hidden corner. The electrician watches his opportunity and when there is no doubt that any employee of the company owning the wire, will be around, he puts in his loop.

He doesn't call for the ordinary passer-by, nor even the police. At the one side what he is doing, he replies that he is repairing the constant on the wire, and his questioner accepts the answer without question, for he knows nothing to the contrary, and it is none of his business to inquire more particularly.

WIRE-TAPPER'S EXCUSE

Even if a man employs the electric company to tap on a wire, the wire-tapper can say that it is an employee of the company and has been told to make some changes in that particular locality.

The other man, not knowing everything in the company's employ, cannot deny it. If there is danger that he will go to the office and report, the wire-tapper for him to say this will be ample for example, so there is practically little danger of exposure.

Then the prosecution is no easy matter. The law relating to electricity does not extend to such thefts as this, they were made long before such a thing was thought of. Accordingly, just as many a man has not rich by stealing another's sheep with impunity, so some men have lighted their houses or run their machinery by stealing the electric current, without the fear of punishment, even if found out.

The putting in of the loop is no very difficult task. If the place for work is convenient it can be done in half an hour to an hour. An opening is made to the live wire, and then with the greatest care, by means of insulated instruments, the wire is cut.

Everything is ready. Insulators are put in place. The ends of the company wire and the tapping wire are joined, and the loop is run to where it is wanted. If it is desired for electric lighting, the apparatus for making use of the current has already been in place, and it is only necessary to make the connections.

The efficiency can be tested in a few moments and the current cut off at a point where the change will be least likely to give warning of any interruption to the company of the circuit thus tapped. If at any time the use of an electric fan or small electric engine is desired the current can be turned into this with the same careful current of water can be carried where it is wanted.

MANAGING THE CURRENT

In fact, the electric current is much more easily managed than a stream of water, except at the critical moment of cutting the wire or of making the new connection.

When the wire is overhead the difficulty is considerably increased, but the electrical expert finds it as easy to make the connections for tapping the current in the air as when his work is legitimate. In the air he must find some means of holding the wire stretched as well as to take off the current.

Of course, it is also harder to escape detection by some one who knows that he has no business at work on the wires. For this reason he usually chooses the top of a bushy tree, where the leaves are thickest in summer. He follows the wire till it passes through such a tree.

If necessary, his climbing from one put on, then he is up among the branches in a moment. A U-shaped piece of steel with clamps and insulators, has been provided for the occasion. He gingerly cuts the wire, catches the end and fastens them together with the piece of steel.

The insulators break the current, and there is a space of an inch or two between the cut extremities, and in this he inserts the two ends of his loop of copper and slips down. He then carries his wire anywhere he pleases, being careful not to excite investigation by keeping the line open too long.

STEALING QUOTATIONS

Such tapping as this is done often for the purpose of getting news or reports. An instance is known where the stock quotations from New York were stolen in this way for more than a year without detection.

Another case is where a man is alleged to have tapped the racing wire here as it crossed Long Bridge. Such disclosures as this are common. The most remarkable on record probably is that of last year, when one of the press associations asserted it found a man taking off its report from a wire going into its Chicago office.

Some experiments have been made with success where the wire was not actually cut, but a side conductor was simply applied, by which a sufficient quantity of electricity was drawn from a heavy current to run a three incandescent lights.

One of the most frequent larceny of the commercial current is where a customer of the company wants more electricity than he feels like paying for. He gets an electrician to tap the current in a place concealed from view before it reaches the meter. Then he can use all the current he wants, but only pays for so much as passes through the meter.

Unsound practices, such as described, are detected in many ways, but usually the first indication of anything wrong is by measurement of the power, generated and consumed, with the quantity paid for. The instruments for measuring the electric current have been brought to such perfection that a very exact account can be kept.

The only difficulty is that there are many possibilities of a leak, or of a number of leaks, instead of theft. An expert goes over the line and finds out which is the case, whenever the instruments show considerable loss.

WHY THEY OBJECT

It is of course much easier to go over



CATCHING THE CRAWFISH

Queer and Exclusive Trade Which Caters to Washingtonians.

DELICACY FOR EPICURES

Where Kearney, the Isaac Walton of Crawfish, Lives—How He Catches the Foxy Crustacean, How They Are Cooked and Distinguished People Who Eat Them.

Pedestrians who have wandered along the Virginia shore of the Potomac, about a half mile north of crime-infested Jackson City, have suddenly come upon a little wooden structure, which has an interesting history.

It is the headquarters of one of Washington city's most novel and exclusive industries. The building is the home of a middle-aged white man named Thomas Kearney and two colored men, who are engaged in crawfish catching.

The catchery house is a queer-looking affair, representing a style of architecture which has long been in vogue among the poor whites and negroes in the backwoods counties of some of the Southern States. It is situated at a point on the shore nearly opposite the Treasury building, where the yellow sandy beach merges and blends into a dark green background of thick foliage.

The building is a one-story affair, and has been knocked almost into a cocked hat by the gales of many years, while the peeling and flaking paint have so discolored the structure that at a distance it resembles a mound of dark earth. The house leans, too, like the famous tower of Pisa. Its attitude is such that a young Washington lawyer, while enjoying a river bank outing with some friends the other day, was prompted to remark:

"That house seems to be leaning sympathetically toward Arlington, the white city of the dead."

A QUEER INDUSTRY.

Crawfish catching, as it is carried on for a select Washington patronage at the little catchery across the river, is an interesting and peculiar industry. These little crabs, which have the funny and awkward habit of walking backwards, are wary game, and therefore not so easily captured. They inhabit the bottom of the river where it is shallow and the marine grasses grow high.

Creeping about with their heads to the front and their fronts to the rear, they capture and devour the small water insects that move about with such rapidity. A crawfish will lie perfectly motionless on the bottom of the stream, with its claws folded, placidly awaiting the coming of the flying water beetle. This little insect, mistaking the gray back of the crustacean for a stone, will glide close to it. Then like a flash out goes the south paw of the crawfish, and with a snap like the closing of a steel trap the beetle is seized and passed piecemeal into the odd-looking mouth of its captor.

Crawfish also feed upon the spawn of fish and tadpoles, but the water beetle is their favorite food and gives the backwater the peculiar flavor which is so much enjoyed by epicures. In some parts of the country the crawfish is known as the crayfish. It is a crustacean of the genus lobster, but is considerably smaller in size and only found in fresh water.

HOW KEARNEY DOES IT.

Kearney, the owner of the catchery, employs several methods of capturing the little delicacies. His most successful one is the use of long lines, on which he ties bunches of water beetles. These lines are used as trawls and dragged gently through the grass. The crawfish upon seeing the beetles follows them to the surface and is scooped in with a small net and confined in a wicker basket containing a mass of moist water grasses.

Like other members of the shell fish family, especially the crab, a crawfish is worthless for all purpose after it dies. They must be cooked while still alive.

Kearney, the crawfish man, was in a talkative mood when seen by the reporter for the Times yesterday. He said he had been in the business six years and has a perfect monopoly.

"You see," he said, "they're such



AMONG LOCAL ATHLETES

Doings in Amateur Circles on Land and Water.

ECHOES OF THE REGATTA

Aquatic Parade Will Be Held Later. Joint Club Excursion—Plan for an Earlier Regatta—Boston Labor Day Races—Gymnastic Championships—Carroll Institute's New Allevy.

The day which is fuller of anxiety and interest than any other day in all the calendar of the local rowing men has come and gone.

This year's Potomac River regatta is a thing of the past, and to-day the boathouse balconies and locker-rooms fairly bubble over with aquatic life, and the men with the "I-told-you-so" racket are as thick as tickleberries in July.

The winners are filled with pleasant recollections, and go over the hard struggle of yesterday with light hearts and smiling faces, tempering their expressions with sympathy and consideration for their less fortunate brethren, as all true sportsmen should. The losers sit glum and thoughtful, wondering "how in the world it all came to happen."

It is the same old story, the same old picture of the aftermath of each year's regatta.

The regatta was a success in every way, and the regatta committee has much, very much, reason to be proud of the result of its labors.

To Chairman O'Leary and Secretary Fischer especially are due great credit for their untiring efforts, and Chairman of the Regatta Committee, Denner and his assistants are likewise entitled to praise for good work well done.

AN EARLIER DATE NECESSARY.

While there were a number of good out-of-town crews, there would have been very many more if an earlier date had been fixed for holding the event. Many crews got out of training right after the national regatta, unless a regatta, such as this, is arranged to be held before the national event. It behooves future regatta committees to bear this in mind and to shape their arrangements and dates accordingly, if they wish large entry lists.

It is still an opinion that the Potomac River regatta can be made second to none in the provincial association regatta, but to do this, means work, and plenty of it, enthusiasm and not lukewarmness.

The success of the event yesterday must be attributed largely to the splendid arrangement of the course, buoy and the police supervision, and at least the latter, which was at all times clear. The largest meet of praise for the success is due to the very fair and impartial and firm and prompt manner in which the referee, Mr. George W. Stutzell, of the Schuylkill Navy, made his decisions. Such work as this is indeed praiseworthy, and should be made an example to others who are called upon to fill a most trying position.

EXCURSION AND AQUATIC PARADE.

In the hurry and worry of completing arrangements for the regatta the aquatic lantern parade, which was intended to lead up to it, was dropped temporarily. It was, however, decided to take up too much time to properly prepare. It is probable that it will be held before the season is over.

The principal item of interest in the minds of the members of the regatta committee is the joint club excursion to be held on Tuesday evening, the 27th inst.

The importance of the success of this affair is very great, as upon it the committee depends for the funds necessary to pay off indebtedness incurred in holding the regatta, and the many members of the clubs and their friends should bear in mind that the committee looks to them to take an interest and tickets at once and help to make it a financial success. It is the first time in the history of the three clubs that they have joined in an excursion, and this fact, as well as the novel features to be presented, should fill the Macalester on Tuesday evening.

NEW ENGLAND'S FALL REGATTA.

The Labor Day regatta at Boston will be rowed over the Charles River course, and will be the seventh annual fall regatta of the New England Amateur Rowing Association, and, as usual, promises to be a most successful affair.

The city fathers of Boston annually appropriate an amount of money to pay for the prizes and necessary expenses and set an example which might with profit be followed by this and other cities.

It is possible that one of our local crews may be entered in the event. The only time our city was represented there was when the Columbia Athletic Club had a junior eight which won in hands-on manner.

The events will be junior and intermediate singles, doubles, junior and senior fours, eights in the three classes, working boats and warlocks for fun.

GYMNASTIC CHAMPIONSHIP.

The second annual meeting for the decision of the amateur gymnastic championship of the Atlantic Association of the A. A. U. will be held at the Winter Courts in Philadelphia on September 7 and 8, at 8 o'clock p. m.

The championship events will be horizontal bar, parallel bars, flying rings, rope climbing, vaulting horse, side and rear, and club swinging. There will also be a special all-around competition to include all of the above, except club swinging and rope climbing.

First, second, and third prizes will be given.

Entries close with J. W. Kelly, Jr., secretary, P. O. Box 455, Philadelphia, on the 30th instant.

What a splendid opportunity the champion gymnast of the A. A. U. would have of carrying off several of the top prizes. Why not enter the local champion?

COLUMBIA ATHLETIC CLUB.

Now that the racing season is over on this river, the rowing men of the Columbia Athletic Club, like those of the other clubs, will devote some of their time to their own amusement and pleasure rowing will be a prominent feature.

The men have stuck at it a long time, and are now getting the training season is over. Capt. Baker deserves much credit for the long series of work he has put in.

The indoor athletes and the football men will now get their heads together for the fall and winter campaign.

Prof. Crossley will take a look over the apparatus in the "gym," and get it in shape. Prospects are promising for large classes in gymnastic work, and work of even higher standard will be accomplished by the gymnasts and acrobats on the professor's little list.

Capt. Wells hopes to get a stronger football team than last year's eleven. He is already in correspondence with strong teams, arranging for games, among the most prominent of these who hope to come on for a game is the "star" eleven of the Chicago Athletic Club.

The bowlers look forward to a successful season, and hope that if there is a league to land the championship.

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The prices are \$75 and \$100—and better material and mechanical skill cannot be put into a bicycle if you paid double the price. That's our reason the sales at the popular wheel rooms average more than ten "Liberties" daily.

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25th List of "Times" Photographs Now Ready to be Called for at Taylor's Photograph Studio, 15th and G Streets.

This list is published daily, with all new numbers as they are completed. Photographs that are called for are struck off each day.

40	108	154	161
225	241	252	265
296	320	377	393
498	576	618	686
706	710	791	843
887	901	910	925
933	944	937	947
928	984	988	993
948	962	990	1006
1009	1012	1014	1039
1029	1033	1048	1052
1073	1078	1083	1089
1089	1108	1108	1111
1115	1122	1129	1141
1142	1168	1204	1220
1223	1227	1228	1249
1250	1256	1259	1260
1264	1276	1278	1289
1291	1291	1294	1298
1300	1303	1306	1312
1327	1330	1335	1344
1355	1358	1361	1365
1367	1369	1376	1385
1388	1394	1401	1407
1408	1413	1421	1423
1435	1437	1452	1455
1456	1463	1480	1491
1500	1509	1522	1545
1555	1557	1565	1570
1583	1588	1594	1601
1624	1636	1640	1677
1690	1691	1719	1726
1736	1784	1800	1806
1819	1821	1835	1837
1838	1847	1861	1873
1882	1887	1888	1897
1899	1908	1921	1925
1927	1928	1930	1942
1968	1967	1972	1983
1984	1988	1997	1998
1999	2000	2001	2002
2004	2007	2009	2014
2015	2030	2031	2034
2035	2058	2071	2075
2092	2096	2102	2113
2117	2123	2124	2127
2132	2149	2150	2156
2156	2164	2172	2178
2180	2172	2186	2194
2196	2199	2206	2209
2210	2212	2216	2218
2220	2232	2235	2236
2253	2256	2257	2263
2294	2295	2299	2308
2299	2309	2312	2316
2326	2336	2342	2349
2351	2352	2357	2361
2368	2368	2370	2374
2377	2379	2381	2385
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2461	2464	2468	2484
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2801	2805	2807	2811
2811	2815	2817	2821

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